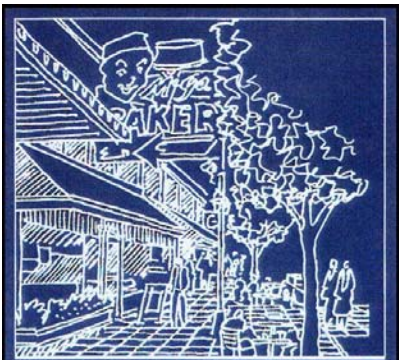


## COMMUNITY CHARACTER ELEMENT



*“This Element aspires to summarize and clarify the issues of growth and to elevate the importance of planning the city’s physical future.”*

### *The Vision for Bremerton’s Future*

*The citizens of Bremerton embrace their city, with pride in its assets and accomplishments, and with optimism about the opportunities it affords. Bremerton is a progressive, active city with diversity in its residents, and with its economic, residential and recreational opportunities.*

*Founded and shaped by a maritime legacy and a stunning natural environment, Bremerton's setting is unique and spectacular. Moreover, as the metropolitan center of West Sound, it provides a convenient middle ground between the regional amenities of Seattle and Tacoma and the recreational treasures of the Kitsap and Olympic Peninsulas. Bremerton's location provides both vistas of -- and unparalleled access to -- the metropolis and the wilderness.*

*While the City’s location is ideal, the heart of the community is found in Bremerton neighborhoods and newly designated urban Centers. Urban Centers, servicing either a neighborhood, a larger community, or a largely employment-focused setting, provide walking convenience to employment, recreation, amenities, goods, and services. Downtown is at the core of the inter-connected Centers with a vibrant, unique concentration of services, public resources, and attractions. In conjunction with building such mixed use urban settings, the qualities of single family areas and other cohesive and healthy neighborhoods will be preserved and protected.*

*Bremerton promotes and encourages responsible business and professional services based on solid state-of-the-art infrastructure. Technology and extensive transportation systems connect Bremerton residents and businesses to the world, while flexible codes assist in the marketing of prime real estate for corporate and industrial developments. Healthy growth over the next twenty years will showcase Bremerton's opportunities, while preserving its assets, accomplishments, and friendly, personable atmosphere.*

***Goals and Policies developed by the community to implement this vision are the core of this element. The Community Character Goals and Policies start on page CC14.***

**COMMUNITY CHARACTER ELEMENT**  
**CONTENTS**

<b>THE VISION FOR BREMERTON’S FUTURE.....</b>	<b>CC-1</b>
INTRODUCTION .....	CC-3
SHAPING BREMERTON THEMES.....	CC-4
1. Distinctive Growth, with Viable Neighborhoods and Centers that Provide Greater Choice and Convenience .....	CC-4
2. Enticing New Development,Focus on the Downtown Regional Center .....	CC-5
3. Supportive Transportation, with Seamless, Efficient, and Varied Choices.....	CC-6
4. Improved Accessibility, especially for the Pedestrian.....	CC-6
5. Quality Housing, with Broader Choices.....	CC-7
6. Business Support, with Increased Opportunity .....	CC-8
7. Environmental Management, Integrating Natural Systems.....	CC-9
8. Community Service, Focusing on Assets .....	CC-10
9. Design Review: Advancing quality urban development.....	CC-11
OVERVIEW: SHAPING THE COMMUNITY’S CHARACTER.....	CC-12
Design Review Process Description .....	CC-12
<b>COMMUNITY CHARACTER GOALS AND POLICIES .....</b>	<b>CC-14</b>
CONCLUSION .....	CC-24

## *Introduction*

The City of Bremerton is emerging from a period of stagnancy, even losing population in the last decennial census, despite unprecedented growth in surrounding Kitsap County and the greater Puget Sound region. Previous comprehensive plans and City efforts to encourage growth in the City, such as enticing zoning capacities and compliance with the mandates of the State’s Growth Management Act, failed to attract significant new investment or population to Bremerton. In the interim, planners and citizens alike have recognized the many encumbrances to the City’s growth. These include the lack of adequately-sized sites for redevelopment, inflexibility in codes for creative development practices, and a persistent, negative perspective of Bremerton as an obsolete commercial hub. With such encumbrances now addressed in the Comprehensive Plan, the Community Character Element is introduced to ensure coordination and quality in the City’s development.

The Community Character Element highlights the goals and polices from this Comprehensive Plan that focus on the quality of future growth in Bremerton. It is the response to a citizen call for new growth that enhances the extraordinary setting and well documented quality of life enjoyed in Bremerton. In sum, it details for citizens and city officials the manner in which the City should grow. Most specifically, it provides a foundation for future design parameters and incentive programs in the development code.

*“In many ways, this Element provides an executive summary of the Comprehensive Plan, explaining the city’s desired direction for its 20-year future.”*

The Community Character Element directs attention to the physical result expected from the implementation of this plan. The goals and policies of the element frame the City’s on-going discussion on the urban design issues asserted by citizens during the creation of the overall Plan. Providing a general discussion of the desired look and feel of the “future Bremerton”, this Element enables readers to understand the common threads that wind through the remainder of the Plan’s Elements.

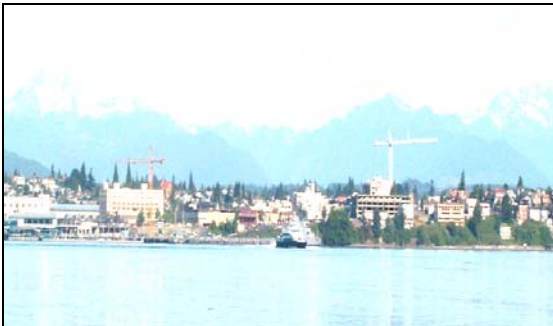
The Community Character Element is organized around the themes of the Shaping Bremerton update process:

- 1. Distinctive Growth**
- 2. Enticing New Development**
- 3. Supportive Transportation**
- 4. Improved Accessibility**
- 5. Quality Housing**
- 6. Business Support**
- 7. Environmental Management**
- 8. Community Service**
- 9. Design Review**

## *Shaping Bremerton Themes*

During the development of this Comprehensive Plan, citizens groups created goals and policies related to functional subjects such as land use, transportation, economic development, and the environment. The participants of the public process soon realized a series of distinct themes were emerging from the work. The themes, described below, encapsulate the community's aspirations for the future. The following sections elaborate on those themes.

### *1. Distinctive Growth, with Viable Neighborhoods and Centers that Provide Greater Choice and Convenience*



Bremerton's neighborhoods and communities direct the City's future growth. Their architectural styles and scales, established boundaries, and central features provide criteria for new development. Central features, such as a neighborhood's viewshed, park, or shoreline access - whether existing or desired - should guide the design and orientation (layout) of new buildings, facilities, and future plans. Design elements used in new buildings are to be encouraged through new incentives in the development code. This will ensure compatibility of new development with surrounding qualities.

This is particularly important in the blending of newly designated Centers, which are strategic locations integrated throughout the city to offer and promote higher density lifestyles. Transitional densities and buffering techniques further protect the qualities of exclusively residential-use neighborhoods from the mixed use centers, neighborhood activity areas, and transportation corridors.

The City will demonstrate a leadership attitude towards achieving cohesive, stable neighborhoods that have a homeowner majority. The City will do this by delivering responsive public actions to improve neighborhood policing, code enforcement, and other public services. Communities (defined in the Land Use Element as a collection of neighborhoods and activity areas within the City) will enjoy new vibrancy with a wider variety of possible residential types. This will allow greater diversity of housing choices throughout the City, such as "row-houses" or new oversized houses that can accommodate multiple units, befitting the adaptive re-use of many of Bremerton's grand historic homes.

Designated Centers, as well as existing traditional neighborhood businesses, will provide convenient commercial and employment services, helping to reverse the loss of residents and commercial activity to areas outside the City. At the same time, the City will be on guard against negative traffic impacts to neighborhoods. The City will establish a traffic control program with standards for maximum traffic volumes, as well as set responses based on the severity of the disturbance to the neighborhood.

For more information and specific policies, please see:

Land Use Element, Goals LU1 & LU2;  
 Transportation Element, Goal T4  
 Housing Element, Goals H5, H6, H7;  
 Economic Development Element,  
 Goal EC1  
 Environment Element Goals E8, E12;  
 City Services Element Goal CS19

## ***2. Enticing New Development, with a Focus on the Downtown Regional Center***



The City of Bremerton will position itself to attract development, especially opportunities for new employers. This requires the modification of existing zoning categories to provide sufficient industrial, commercial, and mixed use lands for business opportunities throughout the city. For example, newly designated Centers will ensure appropriate locations for business zoning, with the support of a critical mass of customers and a quality setting for a mix of uses and high density residential development.

The proactive Centers approach builds on the City's initial focus on downtown Bremerton as the Downtown Regional Center (detailed in the Land Use Element). The mix of uses in such Centers emphasizes the need for design guidelines and incentives to produce a friendly, welcoming atmosphere.

City of Bremerton Comprehensive Plan  
 Community Character Element

The City's unique maritime atmosphere, for example, will be highlighted through such things as dedicated public artwork. Special development incentives, such as favorable parking provisions, will help entice projects which accent the City's proud heritage.

Parking supply for commercial activity areas is critical, but there must be increased sensitivity to efficient circulation and residential needs, using techniques such as shared, off-street parking facilities. This is particularly important in pursuing a full-service Downtown Regional Center with primary attractions to draw people downtown.

An inventory of developable sites with phased infrastructure plans will be established and monitored. In key areas for economic expansion, developable sites should be pre-qualified for environmental permitting as "planned actions". This strategy will extend to rehabilitation programs, such as grant funding to clean up the City's challenging brownfield sites. Special accommodations, such as advanced utility planning and the providing of cutting edge technology, will further encourage use of these sites. In capital improvement plans, the allocation of City resources will strengthen the economic base, mostly by leveraging private investment whenever possible, especially for projects that will diversify industrial and employment enterprises in Bremerton.

For more information and specific policies, please see:

Land Use Element, Goals LU5 and LU6  
 Transportation Element, T13  
 Economic Development Element,  
 Goals EC1, EC3  
 Environment Element, Goal E  
 City Services Element, Goals CS9 & CS21

### *3. Supportive Transportation, with Seamless, Efficient, and Varied Choices*



Bremerton's city size and the City's role as a regional hub provide a foundation for an exemplary transportation system, with diverse and convenient mobility options. The City of Bremerton will work with transportation providers to enhance services and facilities that build on that diversity, reducing the dominance of single-occupant automobiles. The development review process itself will incorporate transit, pedestrian, and non-motorized transportation elements, requiring measures such as bus pull-outs in the city's rights-of-way. Minimal walking distance between buildings, streets, as well as safe road crossings and transit stops will be an important development review consideration. Extensions of existing pedestrian, bicycle, and grid street systems will provide alternative, parallel routes which is critical for regional corridors. Such corridors will thus be prioritized for expedient linkages between the downtown and other designated Centers throughout the City.

For more information and specific policies, please see:

Transportation Element, Goals T1, T6, T10  
Land Use Element, Goals LU3

### *4. Improved Accessibility, especially for the Pedestrian*

Bremerton's transportation system is well positioned for innovative development, especially expanded use of alternative travel options, enabled by the existing transit and ferry systems. Additionally, newly designated Centers will be strongly characterized by walkable designs, with linkages to one another and integration into their surrounding communities. A non-motorized plan will emphasize safety on trails, especially for bicyclists, with engineered bike lanes and uniform signage. Along the City's trail system there will be new recreational opportunities, encouraging green-space and open vistas as pleasant connections throughout the City. Set-backs, landscaping requirements, and stormwater drainage, developed in conjunction with trails, will further support these purposes. Likewise, street ends, parks, and open space will offer special opportunities to improve access to the shoreline for everyone's enjoyment.

For more information and specific policies, please see:

Transportation Element, Goals T2, T6, & T11  
Land Use Element, Goals LU3 & LU4

## 5. Quality Housing, with Broader Choices



The City will focus its housing programs and investments in quality homes for all residents. For example, the City will evaluate the credit-worthiness of a structure before assisting in its rehabilitation, weatherization, or other home ownership programs. A higher quality housing stock will also result from new codes enabling a larger variety of new housing types. In these efforts, the City will promote quality, affordable housing for all family types, ages, and incomes, including mid and upper income households. New, creative housing projects, such as artists' lofts and courtyard homes, will meet the needs of special populations such as short term residents and citizens in need of transitional housing.

Bremerton will promote private and public efforts to secure adequate capital for affordable housing projects at competitive and favorable market costs. Priority will go to projects that advance owner-occupied units. Such projects will also benefit from the elimination of regulatory impediments whenever possible, improved certainty in development regulations, and an expedited permit process.

Infill opportunities on vacant or underutilized parcels, to be built at the high end of allowed residential densities in locations close to infrastructure capacities and employment, will yield cost efficiency, further benefiting new developers and residents.

Bremerton's disproportionate share of the region's publicly subsidized (rental) housing contributes to a weaker tax base, which is exacerbated by the correlated need for community services. New strategies will focus on concentrated low quality housing areas as opportunities for revitalization of the City, including the use subsidized rental housing for transitional housing towards new homeownership opportunities. Public resources will help break concentrations of poverty as well as remove blighting influences. Priority will be given to those remove or abate structures which contribute to the blight of the city's neighborhoods. For example, rehabilitation of substandard structures will only occur when the cost of rehabilitation is less than the cost of replacement housing. An exception to this criteria is preservation work, associated with structures of historical or architectural significance. Additional City preference will be given to special needs households with children or elderly members, within privately owned developments that contain a mix of market-rate and below market rate units. Alternatively, housing that is entirely publicly-owned and subsidized should be dispersed in small, neighborhood scale buildings.

For more information and specific policies, please see:

Housing Element, Goals H1, H3, H5

## ***6. Business Support, with Increased Opportunity***



The City of Bremerton will grow a more diversified economy, with greater opportunities for its businesses and residents. The City will go beyond marketing its trained labor force, convenient setting, and relatively low land cost, to address residual barriers to economic growth. State-of-the-art digital communication lines, for example, already throughout Bremerton, will be integrated into the city's utility and infrastructure planning.

The City and its partnering jurisdictions will apply tax strategies that attract and retain businesses. The City will also regularly review its policies and operations to provide incentives for economic investment. In these efforts, the City will demonstrate its interest in securing primary businesses. There is a need for developable sites to secure new primary businesses and employment opportunities. This is also one of the critical factors in pursuing annexations which yield economic gains for the City of Bremerton.

The main indication of the City's support for businesses will be a sense of welcome, customer service, and teamwork toward property owners and the development community. For example, City staff will expedite the permit and development process and publish condensed development guides with greater clarity and sensitivity to customer needs. The City will be proactive in giving general education of development interests to property owners, especially when there are commercial opportunities for homeownership sites or improvements that can contribute to a marketable quality of life. Likewise, Bremerton's exceptional labor pool will be promoted by the City, with support for workforce training programs and business training initiatives.

For more information and specific policies, please see:

Economic Development Element,  
Goals EC2, EC5, EC6  
City Services Element, CS9, CS11

## ***7. Environmental Management, Integrating Natural Systems***



To ensure the long-term health of Bremerton, the City will promote sustainable growth and activities, making the City more livable with reduced waste and less environmental pollution. In this effort, the City staff will ensure the monitoring of pollution levels, establish goals for reduction and protection of resources such as groundwater, and introduce new development standards, including outdoor lighting and water run-off limitations. This will require education efforts and public involvement, especially regarding conservation of nonrenewable resources, critical areas, habitats, and diverse ecosystems.

To aid this process, the City will invest in inventorying and mapping its critical environmental resources, including shoreline management areas, protected near-shore habitats, and the proposed establishment of Marine Protected Areas. A grant-funded approach to brown-fields will identify and restore potentially valuable properties that currently lay fallow and detract from a healthy natural environment. The City will also demonstrate and welcome responsible business practices with code provisions that encourage environmentally sensitive development practices, such as onsite infiltration for stormwater.

*City of Bremerton Comprehensive Plan*  
Community Character Element

Citizens will benefit from a fully developed open-space system that increases the amount of green-space and compliments habitat protection goals, public safety concerns, and recreational needs. For example, the system will integrate active community gardens, as well as passive areas that preserve the integrity of riparian corridors and steep slopes. Well-maintained City owned properties will also be strategically incorporated in this system. With citizen participation, Bremerton will protect, revitalize and expand native vegetation and tree supply through the incorporation of suitable native plants in urban landscapes and through the removal of invasive non-native vegetation.

The transportation system is central to the effort of integrating the natural environment with a quality urban experience, especially mitigating the impact of motorized vehicles on air and water quality. Finally, the City will encourage a systems philosophy in decision making, realizing the multiple benefits of such things as use of alternative fuels, pervious surfaces, and increased walkability within the City.

For more information and specific policies, please see:  
Environment Element, Goals E1, E3, E4, E6, E7, E8, E10  
Transportation Element, Goal T3  
City Services Element, Goal CS18

## 8. Community Service, Focusing on Assets



Collaborating with citizens and local agencies, proactive community services will enhance the quality of life in Bremerton. The use of technology, especially the capacity of internet, will further enhance efforts to make City services and public information more accessible and convenient for citizens. Public facilities and services will likewise be conveniently and equitably located throughout the community, chiefly through the prescription and monitoring of service levels that reflect community values in areas such as law enforcement, fire protection, and sanitary sewers. These “levels of service” will be regularly monitored, assuring that capital facilities are provided concurrent (at the same time as) with new development, particularly transportation facilities. A safeguard against potential negative impacts of growth, these standards also empower more specific planning processes, such as comprehensive plans for focused services such as public utilities, schools, and recreation.

Promoting a leadership attitude in delivering responsive public actions will be an ongoing challenge in light of limited fiscal resources. As far as revenue allows, the City will proactively enforce ordinances, especially in relation to Code Enforcement, Emergency Management, and Community Policing. Public safety is primary, with enhanced development standards for pedestrians to improve sidewalks, lighting, and street crossings throughout the city. The City will make special efforts to encourage undergrounding of future and existing utilities.

Growth strategies, with cost-effectiveness criteria, will necessarily assert economic considerations for the City, especially in decisions to annex or extend service areas or infrastructure capacities. Likewise, Bremerton will pursue alternative and creative funding mechanisms for public services and facilities, such as more reliance on licensing and user fees for specialized services. The City will also work towards a strategic impact fee program, recognizing the responsibility of the development community in providing for the costs of new growth. Ultimately, however, the success of these efforts is dependent on partnerships with citizens and local associations. The City acknowledges this fundamental thrust in effective community development, and will welcome public involvement, especially in the monitoring, review, and planning of all City services and facilities.

For more information and specific policies, please see:

City Service Element  
Housing Element, Goals H6

## ***9. Design Review: Advancing quality urban development***



The major themes of the Comprehensive Plan all relate in some way to urban design issues as they define the desired look and feel of the community. To evaluate progress towards the community's vision, the desired community character must be detailed and supported by the Plan, which becomes empowering legislation for new development. The goals and policies found in this Community Character Element, beginning on page 14, encourage quality in the physical development of the City of Bremerton. To implement these goals and policies, the community hereby embraces a design review process to advance quality urban development in Bremerton.

For more information and specific policies, please read the following section, "Overview, Shaping Community Character" and the Goals and Policies which follow it.

## *Overview: Shaping the Community's Character*

Cities have a certain feel to them. When you walk down the street, you receive cues about community heritage and aspirations from your surroundings. It can be the feel of certain building materials - such as cobble stone underfoot, the smell of saltwater tides, or viewsheds of mountains and autumn trees - that together, suggest a sense of place. Over time, we identify our immediate surroundings as an extension of our individual lives. Our homes, neighborhoods and communities are clearly places where we invest ourselves and share with visitors, but they also offer a sense of familiarity to us in a fast-changing world.

We each have favorite spots in the City, be it a friend's front porch, a cozy café, a street bench overlooking the water, or playing fields at a City park. Our children gravitate to well-designed places quickly, putting wide sidewalks, overhead canopies, or bike paths to fast use. Adults show similar preferences, searching out places that are sheltered, with a sense of security, intrigue, or welcome. Like the chair chosen in order to sit comfortably at a table, the "furniture" of our cities can also be more comfortable to us when there are considerations for the surroundings and the preferences communicated by the community.

Urban design ideas can bring a fresh way of perceiving streets, buildings, and city spaces. Familiarity with good urban designs also provides insights into why certain places are or are not appealing. When a community's urban design values are considered, a

*"When a community's urban design values are considered, a development project is strengthened."*

development project is strengthened. Through the design review process, new projects are enabled to meet community expectations and compliment the desired character for a quality urban setting.

Urban design operates on various scales. It can help orientate people through the layout of streets and buildings. It can place new value on certain building materials, such as picture windows at the street level, which allow for a visual connection between the indoor and outdoor environment.

### *Design Review Process Description*

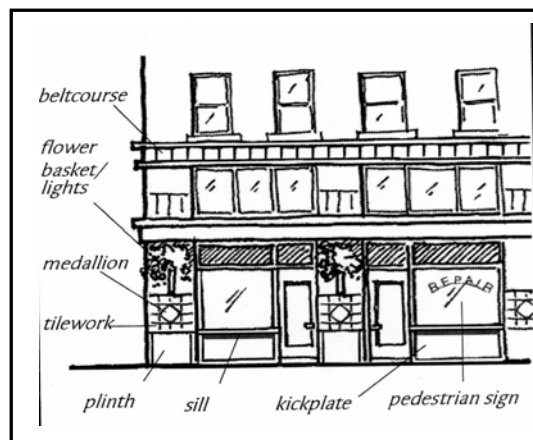
Design Review is not a series of rules as much as it is a process to evaluate how a project can be best integrated into the community. The community's design ethics can be applied to buildings, streets, land uses, park development, or any physical element.

Design, itself, suggests care, association, and sense of identity. When applied in the development of a new project, the community benefits with improved neighborhoods and compatible businesses. Compatible and complimentary design also ensures public improvements such as burying power lines, enhancing water/sewer lines, passing safety bonds, etc.

The ultimate result is an established, desirable character that increases community pride.

The design review process should be flexible, encouraging builders to propose innovative designs. For this reason, design provisions should be mostly qualitative rather than quantitative statements. Quantitative approval criteria are avoided to ensure that the design review process does not dictate design or introduce a regulatory burden. This resulting flexibility, however, should not be construed as merely advisory or to otherwise diminish the legal effect of basic design standards as approval criteria for certain projects.

There are potentially three tiers of approval criteria for qualifying projects. First, every new development project within the City of Bremerton should address the Community Character goals and policies. Second, Design Standards, based on the Community Character goals and policies, shall be developed and applied as requirements to projects in the Centers which meet certain (not yet defined) thresholds. Finally, Design Guidelines developed through sub-area planning processes, shall be administered within areas of the City such as neighborhoods and newly designated Centers.



All three tiers are considered part of a Design Review process; however, only Design Guidelines would require a new public review process, administered by City staff, during a project's permitting stage. Guidelines are a means for developers to demonstrate general compliance with local design values in specific areas. For example, an approved neighborhood plan might establish localized design guidelines and a review committee to augment the City's approval authority. Guidelines with a public review process can also work as a substitute for related compulsory standards when agreed upon by the City.

## Community Character Goals and Policies



### **CC1 Demonstrate excellent urban design qualities in new development**

**CC1A** Utilize urban design guidelines, standards, and project review procedures to promote high-quality development that enhances the positive effects of new investment in neighborhoods.

*Discussion:* New and remodeled projects can impact an area either positively or negatively. The application of design guidelines and standards through a design review process for building and site development helps ensure that the effect of new development is positive. These practices also provide assurance that new or remodeled buildings develop in a manner that does not diminish residents' quality of life. This would apply to all new commercial, multifamily (attached) structures, Planned Unit Developments (PUDs), and exterior remodels of existing commercial structures.

**CC1B** Ensure that new development is of a type, scale, orientation, and design that improves upon the neighborhood's desired and defined character, aesthetics, and qualities.

*Discussion:* A common concern expressed by neighborhood residents about new, infill development or redevelopment is that projects will not "fit" the neighborhood. The failure of traditional zoning practices to produce buildings of compatible scale, architecture, and function have made neighborhoods wary of new development.

The acceptance and successful community integration of centers, especially within or adjacent to strictly residential environments, is greatly dependent on development rules and procedures that insure projects will add to neighborhood quality. Among the most critical elements to neighborhood quality are keeping new buildings to a similar scale. This ensures that land uses serve the surrounding neighborhood(s), maintaining traffic patterns and speeds that promote pedestrian activity, insuring privacy of existing residences, minimizing the effects of light, noise and glare on surrounding properties, and creating structures and improvements that enhance the visual quality of the neighborhood.

**CC1C** Ensure on-premise business signs are of size, number, quality, and style to provide identification of the businesses they support while contributing a positive visual character



to the community.

*Discussion:* On-premise signs provide an important public function by identifying sources of desired goods and services. Cities where signs provide identification of on-premise businesses without degrading the visual environment are noted for their high quality community character. Collectively, the effectiveness of business signs is enhanced when they are not too large, too numerous, or too distracting in visual character.

On-premise signs should be of high quality and managed in all urban environments to reduce visual clutter, which contributes to a distracting experience for motorists and to visual blight, especially in proximity to living environments. Business signs in residential settings should relate to the lower-intensity activity of these environments. Sign area and design guidelines should reflect the relative intensity of commercial arterials as well as any unique district character, such as a historic neighborhood.

Exclusively residential areas should be free of business signs entirely, except for code-complying, unobtrusive signs to identify legal home occupations.

**CC1D** Prohibit new construction of billboards and eliminate existing billboards over time using various means.

*Discussion:* Visual quality of the urban environment is one of the distinguishing characteristics of communities. The reputation of some cities is based largely on their good or bad visual image. Because of its scale or location, off-premise advertising including billboards can be among the biggest contributors to negative imagery. This advertising detracts from the surrounding setting and distracts the attention of motorists. Off-premise advertising does not share that public identification value of on-premise signs. The large size of billboard advertising dominates the immediate visual environment as well as reduces the effectiveness of adjacent on-premise business signs. To avoid extreme financial hardship to owners of existing billboard structures, eventual elimination by amortization is encouraged.

**CC1E** Identify and implement ways to control forms of off-premise advertising other than billboards.

*Discussion:* Small off-premise signs designed to catch the eye of motorists add visual clutter to streetscapes and are particularly intrusive in residential settings. Signboards placed “temporarily” near the street edge often encroach on the sidewalk, impede the safe movement of pedestrians, and distract motorists. These signs should be prohibited along all streets.

However, in the pedestrian-oriented setting of centers, A-frame sandwich boards should be allowed as a helpful feature to attract customers on foot into businesses, provided that they are sited to retain the capacity of sidewalks for circulation and ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) accessibility.

**CC1F** Support the expansion of wireless communication networks without creating negative visual impacts from telecommunication facilities on surrounding properties, the city skyline, and, in particular, residential neighborhoods.

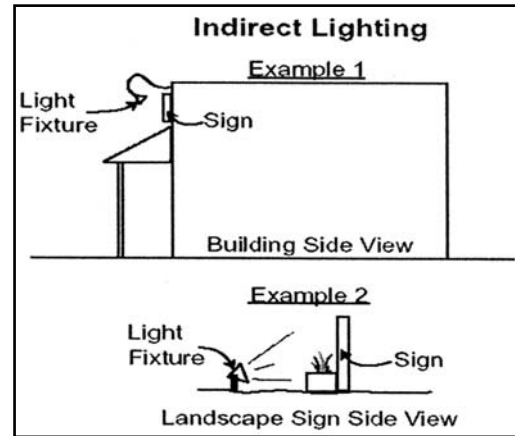
*Discussion:* Telecommunication facilities, including wireless communication support towers, can be visually obtrusive. For this reason, efforts should be made to place them as efficiently and as effectively as possible, thus minimizing the total number of such sites. For example, maximum use should be made of existing structures that can support telecommunication facilities before new stand-alone facilities are constructed for this purpose. The City should require telecommunication sites to utilize visually unobtrusive technology, landscaping, and screening techniques whenever possible.



In general, telecommunication antennae should be mounted on existing public facilities such as above-ground water reservoirs or taller building facades, rather than on new towers.

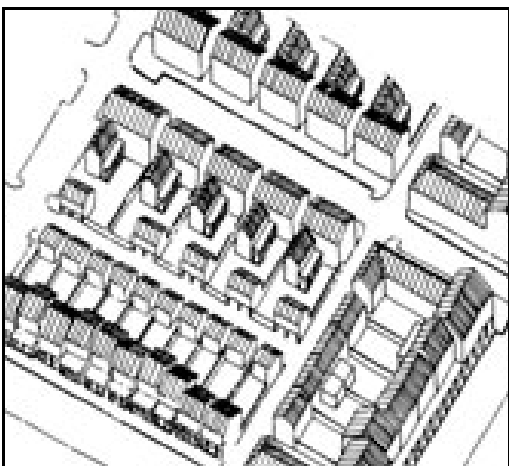
**CC1G** Insure that display, flood and direct lighting of properties and structures enhances safety, circulation, and aesthetics without creating light and glare impacts to adjacent properties or reducing public enjoyment of viewing the night sky.

*Discussion:* Lighting on buildings and sites can have a dramatic effect on the form, mood, quality, and character of an area.



Lighting contributes to the convenience of the user and increases the safety and security of a site, the street, and surrounding properties during night hours. Although the color, amount, intensity, and type of lighting are major factors contributing to the form and character of the city, poorly managed lighting is a nuisance. Careless use of outdoor lighting damages the aesthetics of the nighttime environment and decreases security and safety by creating hazards through reduced contrast, increased glare, and distraction. Lighting on buildings, parking and landscaped areas, and the site in general, should not brightly illuminate or create glare, either directly or indirectly, beyond the property’s boundaries. The use of directional or “cut-off” lighting saves energy and resources, allows enjoyment of the night sky, and gives the city an attractive night appearance.

**CC1H** Utilize development standards to ensure that land uses or structures that are accessory to a principal use are developed in a manner compatible with the principal structure and the character of the surrounding area.



*Discussion:* An accessory structure that is of a greater bulk, larger scale, or greater height than the principal structure or the typical structures of the immediate area would generally detract from the visual character of the particular area and may be considered an “eyesore.” As a general rule-of-thumb, an accessory structure should be of a lesser square footage and volume and should utilize materials and colors matching or less intense than the principal structure. An accessory land use without a structure, such as outdoor storage, should be located and designed to be subordinate and complimentary to the principal use.

**CC1I** Require accessory dwelling units in residential districts to be designed to be physically and visually compatible with the main structure.



*Discussion:* Accessory dwelling units can increase the amount of available, affordable housing and can provide income for homeowners. These dwelling units should be created in a manner that does not adversely affect the neighborhood. The conversion or creation of new accessory units is made more acceptable by establishing parking requirements and specific siting and design controls that ensure neighborhood character will be maintained or enhanced. (See CH1H)



**CC2 Assure that new development relates to surrounding uses and provides for urban livability**

**CC2A** Utilize zoning and design standards that have flexibility and incentives to ensure excellence in urban design, and which are compatible with surrounding land uses.

*Discussion:* Complimenting a neighborhood's character, quality, and property value is a benefit to the residents and business owners and provides greater confidence for community stability. Adopted standards that are adhered to, even in areas where guidelines provide flexibility, protect and instill assurance for both established and prospective residents and investors. The standards should address traffic, parking, loading control, structural mass, open space, green areas, lighting, landscaping and buffering, and safety of persons and property, as well as noise, vibration, dust, and odors impacts.

**CC2B** Ensure that infill construction and area redevelopment are done in a manner that reinforces the neighborhood's desired and defined character and that architecturally compliments the surrounding commercial and residential areas.

*Discussion:* Infill construction can benefit the community when done in a manner that does not detract from the area. Flexible design standards can permit higher intensity activities with conditions to be sensitive to the desired character.

**CC2C** Encourage building and site design that allows a variety of housing forms and also is compatible with the character of the immediate surrounding area, thereby generating community support for new types of housing development.



*Discussion:* Increasing housing densities can enable efficient use of developable sites, protection of sensitive lands, cost-effective provision of city utilities, provision of affordable housing, and increased ridership on mass transit. A variety of housing types, such as townhouses, courtyard buildings, and cluster-housing, contributes to housing diversity and interest, and provides more opportunities for prospective residents. Compatible design helps make increased densities acceptable to the current residents. Finally, higher residential density in commercial areas can provide additional stability for businesses, while lessening automobile dependence.

**CC2D** Promote consistent massing of buildings.



*Discussion:* Divergent building scales can be moderated between adjacent uses, by employing stepped building heights and softening architectural features. It is particularly important to maintain well-designed transitions between designated open spaces and built-up areas.

**CC2E** Buildings should demonstrate efforts to accommodate a human scale and urban livability.



*Discussion:* Human scale can be achieved through architectural detailing and by variation in the three-dimensional character of the building, as it rises skyward. Monolithic, vertical walls along a maximum building footprint are strongly discouraged. Lower levels should be differentiated architecturally from the rest of the building. Designs that place active uses along the first floor are encouraged. For buildings that front streets (collector streets or arterials), apartments should be on the second or higher floors. There should be clear articulation of different users that occupy the lower building levels. Ground floor street-oriented building areas should be occupied by active commercial uses.

*City of Bremerton Comprehensive Plan*  
Community Character Element

**CC2F** Create and improve urban open spaces.

*Discussion:* Development projects should contribute “in-lieu (of building) shares” of the cost for open space amenities to be developed or improved, such as a plaza, tree planting program, or an urban park.

Landscaping should be planned to establish a planting strip at least 5-feet wide, with indigenous plants, between the road and sidewalk in all commercial and multifamily projects. Fences and walls in the front setback area should be designed to enhance the quality of open space for both occupants and the person on the street, by maintaining as much visual contact between public and private zones as possible.

**CC2G** Discourage loading, building systems, and outdoor storage areas from locating on the street side of a building, and/or provide for screening from the view of streets and adjacent properties.

*Discussion:* Screening of loading areas and outdoor storage from any public right-of-way by use of materials similar to the front façade, can mitigate any conflicts. The screen may consist of a permanent architectural feature and landscape elements such as walls, berms, trees, and shrubs. Utility meters and other utility apparatus, including transformers, should be located to the rear of the structure and screened from the view of public streets and adjoining properties. Roof top mechanical installations shall be appropriately screened so as to block the view from adjacent public and private streets and properties. Screening shall compliment the overall theme of the building.



**CC3 Provide for a safe, pleasant, and rich pedestrian experience**

**CC3A** Encourage a sense of neighborliness and community by orienting one or more building entrances to commercial buildings towards the pedestrian sidewalks and pathways that lead to adjoining neighborhoods.

*Discussion:* Orienting the business entrance for pedestrian access in addition to discouraging placement of parking between the entrance and the sidewalk, attracts the business from the surrounding neighborhood as well as the motoring public.

**CC3B** Promote pedestrian-oriented environments in Centers through the creation of streetscapes and building designs that make walking an attractive and convenient transportation mode.

*Discussion:* Features of well-designed Centers include streetscapes that give special attention for pedestrians and code requirements for all transportation modes. Buildings such as canopies, seating, street trees, and well-maintained, wide sidewalks also contribute to the attractiveness of Centers for walking.

**CC3C** Encourage attractive pedestrian-oriented development.



*Discussion:* Creating attractive pedestrian-oriented development requires attention to detail. For example, the provision of ample sidewalks, street furniture, landscaping, and street level access (physical and visual) make the pedestrian feel more comfortable. Buildings in pedestrian-oriented environments, particularly Centers, should be designed to provide street-level, active uses on all street fronts. Direct access into buildings from the public sidewalk encourages walk-in traffic. In addition to these measures, the pedestrian environment is enriched by buildings with a higher level of architectural detail in the street-level facades.

**CC3D** Encourage attractive transit-oriented development.



*Discussion:* For transit users, the distance to stops, location of shelters, lighting, and safety, as well as accessibility to other goods and services contribute to the friendliness and convenience of transit use. The city should consider development incentives, such as increased building height, greater site coverage, or reduction in parking, in exchange for transit and pedestrian-oriented development.

**CC3E** Mitigate the effect of parking lots in centers and other pedestrian-oriented environments.



*Discussion:* Non-associated surface parking lots within Centers should be planned to be no larger than 25 spaces per lot. Parking lots serving businesses adjacent to each other should be connected to one another. Surface parking lots with more than 100 spaces are prohibited between the building façade and the street. Wherever possible, parking will be sited internally, above or below grade, so that street level frontage areas avoid parking use. Surface parking for commercial uses should generally not be placed between the building façade and the street curb.

If locating a parking structure on the interior of the site is not feasible, the structure should be oriented towards commercial uses, with the shortest dimension fronting the street wherever possible. Where above ground structured parking is located at the perimeter of a building, this should be screened in a way that cars are not visible from the street or adjacent buildings.

**CC3F** Mitigate conflict points for pedestrians with vehicles, especially at primary entrances in front of buildings.

*Discussion:* It is safer and more inviting for pedestrians when choke points for motor vehicles are located as far away from the street as possible. Sites with on site parking can be improved with landscaped "throats" for cars, allowing stacking (line of cars) on the lot, rather than on the street or public sidewalks.

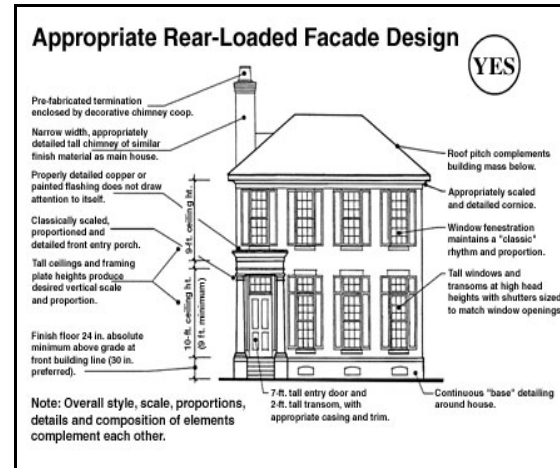


**CC4 Promote the development of areas of special character, encouraging a diversity of communities within the city**

**CC4A** Ensure efficacious application of the Design Review process through the existing time parameters of the permit process, yet incorporate the expertise of design professionals and community interests.

*Discussion:* Design guidelines are a means to encourage design solutions that meet the intent of the Comprehensive Plan, especially the Community Character's goals and policies. They represent a flexible application of the more specific development standards, to achieve a more qualitative than a quantitative result. To have flexibility, however, requires interpretations of a community's specific interest, as specified ahead of time through a sub area public process. Such processes should include design professionals and community members, to provide a mix of design expertise and community values to set up the guidelines and possibly review the decision of the City's Director of Community Development.

**CC4B** Utilize design guidelines that are understandable, enforceable, predictable, and consistent when applied to sub-areas, Centers, and individual neighborhoods, in order to evaluate proposed development.



*Discussion:* Urban design guidelines include text and graphics that illustrate the desired character within a Center, community, or neighborhood. Guidelines are used to avoid arbitrary application of prescriptive design requirements during project review. They may discuss such features as desired building scales, façade treatments, streetscape designs, lighting and signage, or other physical characteristic.

By State law, design review processes must occur within statutory time limitations. To the greatest extent practical, design review should be conducted concurrently with other project approval activities such as review of building plans or processing of land use applications.

**CC4C** Utilize design guidelines and criteria that are based on local community participation and the particular character and development issues of each special district or neighborhood.

*Discussion:* Due to inherent differences in neighborhoods and particular needs of special districts, each may need to develop a set of area-specific guidelines that augment citywide standards. Local input and the existing characteristics of an area or special district are the basis for design guidelines used for the evaluation of specific projects in that particular area. Area-specific guidelines should be flexible enough to allow for some creative interpretation.

**CC4D** Include design guidelines in neighborhood planning processes to address local urban design issues and make neighborhoods attractive, safe places.

*Discussion:* Neighborhood residents are best equipped to determine what neighborhood design details and elements represent the particular characteristics of their specific area. Citywide standards may not adequately address issues that are of concern to their specific neighborhood. The inclusion of development design guidelines in the neighborhood planning process helps ensure that these issues are addressed and that future construction projects are compatible with the neighborhood.

**CC4E** Ensure that buildings in designated Centers are built to the property line to the greatest extent possible.

*Discussion:* Buildings in designated centers will “enclose” the street, creating an intimate urban character. Building façades that are parallel to the street create a type of building “wall” that can contribute to such a room-like feeling.

**CC4F** Discourage strongly thematic architectural styles associated with some chain restaurants, gas stations, big box, and service stores, and, if utilized, purposely modify such to be compatible with regional architectural styles.



*Discussion:* Local character should be demonstrated in the design, especially through the use of quality building materials and styles.

## *Conclusion*

Individual citizens ultimately define community character; however, the physical setting can be critical, as an aid or hindrance to how citizens associate themselves and their city. The built environment demonstrates pride and opportunity, as it represents local culture, assets, and weaknesses. The citizens of Bremerton realize that the “feel” of their City impacts new investments, civic engagement, and personal security. As evidenced in their goals and policies in this Comprehensive Plan, citizens seek a proactive approach to community development and quality growth. The policies specifically suggest quality over quantity, especially in encouraging new housing development and higher density development around central features and public amenities.

No longer will residents or visitors perceive the City’s neighborhoods and commercial areas as places “where things just happen”. The relationships between places and people, too often minimized, will instead be highlighted, acknowledging their association, purpose, or inherent organization. Neighborhood and District Centers will best demonstrate this concept, designed through a planning process to provide convenient services in a unique, identifiable setting that compliments the character of surrounding communities.

In fact, the City has historically developed in distinct ways, taking into account viewsheds and topography for example. Sloped terrain, such as in Manette, generally yields lower intensity projects; whereas level ground tends to develop with greater intensity, as seen in the Charleston area. Moderate slopes allow a comfortable street grid, while steep hills often result in meandering routes and less traditional city blocks. This chapter attempts to raise that consciousness, and to accent the Comprehensive Plan’s vision of new growth and vibrancy which is compatible and complimentary to the desired and historic community character.

The maritime and historical legacies of Bremerton, coupled with its natural beauty and its unique geographical position in the Northwest region, present an inspiring foundation for design review and community character. Citizens express deep admiration and pride in the City’s history, especially its legacy of service to the nation. Structures such as the Admiral Theater, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, World War I federal kit bungalow housing, and the grand homes seen upon arrival in Bremerton by ferry, speak to the City’s history and the lasting quality of the kind of development this element advances. Bremerton’s community character ultimately reflects the City’s aspiration to preserve its attributes while welcoming quality new growth.